

# **Libby Community Advisory Group**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **July 14, 2005**

#### **Introductions**

Gerald Mueller and members of the Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) introduced themselves. A list of the members in attendance is attached below as Appendix 1.

#### **Agenda**

The CAG agreed to the following agenda for this meeting:

- Agency reports
  - EPA
  - State
  - TAG
  - CARD Clinic
- Helen Clarke presentation
- Public Comment

#### **EPA Report**

Peggy Churchill reported on behalf of EPA on the following topics.

##### Cleanups

- Residential - EPA has completed to date a total of 440 residential cleanups, including 85 this year. EPA expects to achieve its goal of 200 cleanups this year.
- Stimson Central Maintenance Building - The cleanup is going well and is 75 - 80% complete.
- Helipad - Cleanup of the helicopter landing pad, coordinated with St. John's Lutheran Hospital, will begin shortly.

Remedial Investigation Sampling - Sampling of Highway 37, the Bluffs, and residential carpets is underway as a part of the process of completing the record of decision (ROD) for the remedial cleanup.

“Denver Lite” - EPA will conduct a workshop in Libby on September 14 and 15 on the Superfund process and several technical cleanup issues. This workshop will be similar to that hosted by EPA on October 5 and 6, 2004 in Denver for the Libby Area Technical Assistance Group (TAG) and state and local agency personnel.

J. Neils Park - Visible vermiculite has been found near the bleachers and the restrooms at J. Neils Park. Contaminated soil at these areas will be capped so that these facilities can be used safely during the upcoming rodeo.

New Personnel - Ms. Churchill introduced Mike Cirian who is the new field project manager in Libby.

*Audience Member Question - Has EPA determined the source of the contamination of Highway 37?*

Answer - We have not determined the source. We are aware that W.R. Grace hauled ore from the mine on the highway in uncovered trucks. Also, the Montana Department of Transportation apparently used soils from the amphitheater to build up the road shoulders

*Audience Member Comment - In 1996, when Highway 37 was rebuilt, I stripped off vegetation up to and 2" under the old pavement. The soil removed was replaced with soil from the site of the reregulation bridge, which was above the mine and therefore not contaminated. Since 1996, only EPA has hauled amphibole asbestos over this road. W.R. Grace attorneys have called me and indicated that because of the 1996 rebuild, they expect to be able to argue successfully that the Company is not responsible for the asbestos contamination. This is an important issue, because if W.R. Grace is not responsible, then EPA or the Montana Department of Transportation may be.*

### **State Report**

Catherine LeCours reported on behalf of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). She passed out the Community Involvement Plan for the Troy cleanup which reflects her interviews and contacts with Troy citizens. Copies of the plan can be found at the EPA Information Center and the Troy City Hall. She stated that the high school cleanup will not occur this summer.

### **TAG Report**

LeRoy Thom reported on behalf of the TAG. The TAG met last Tuesday night, and reiterated its concern to EPA about removing carpets and cleaning crawl spaces. A TAG Committee is working on hiring a new scientific advisor

*Audience Member Question - Are you considering hiring a part time technical advisor?*  
Answer - Yes.

### **CARD Clinic Report**

Mike Giesey and Tanis Hernandez reported on behalf of the CARD Clinic. The CARD open house is scheduled from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, August 12. It will include a presentation by USGS about amphibole mineralogy and a viewing of the film "Libby, Montana". Copies of the CARD newsletter were passed out, and copies are available for anyone wishing one. The CARD will have a presentation about the Zonolite Study on Wednesday, July 20 at 7-8 p.m. in this room (the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall). The CARD is hearing reports of people who have moved from Libby and who have asbestos-related disease that is being mis-diagnosed. If you know of someone outside of Libby who is having difficulty with diagnosis or treatment, please refer them to the CARD. We have had telephone calls from doctors in Carson City, Minnesota, and California. We are developing a web site that will provide information for doctors and people not living in Libby.

*Audience Member Question - Do you have any comments about Dr. Spence's letter to the editor regarding the Montana Asbestos Screening and Surveillance Activity published tonight in the Western News?*

Answer - No. We haven't read the letter yet.

*CAG Member Comment - I am concerned about the grant money that is going to MASSA. Maybe the money should go to CARD instead.*

Response - MASSA does not provide diagnostic or treatment services. It is conducting a screening study under contract with ATSDR.

Response - MASSA is currently in the third year of a five year contract. Governor Schweitzer has not been willing to intervene during the current contract. It is not possible until the contract ends to change the service provider. If, when the current contract expires, its extension is let competitively, then CARD might bid for it.

*CAG Member Comment - Staff of St. John's Hospital and CARD met today to discuss the MASSA program. Apparently, \$20,000 is currently spent by MASSA on administration and \$90,000 for "B-Readers" to interpret x-rays. We have asked for the last audit of this program and will make it available to the CARD and CAG when we receive it.*

*CAG Member Comment - A committee is working with the state regarding the MASSA program to make sure that it is meeting Libby's needs. The MASSA "B-Readers" are reputable professionals who know asbestos disease.*

*CAG Member Comment - We have a child in Havre who has been diagnosed with asbestos-related disease. He has been unable to get antibiotics and has been told just to get over it.*

Response - The CARD is trying to make arrangements to see people who have moved away. The key is to find a doctor who cares about his patients and who is willing to talk with the CARD.

*CAG Member Comment - Not everyone can afford to travel to the CARD for diagnosis and treatment.*

*Audience Member Comment - About five months ago we heard about research to identify a blood-indicator for asbestos disease. What progress has been made?*

Response - This would be a good question for the UM asbestos conference.

*Audience Member Question - What is the significance of the reference to Zonolite in the study that will be presented on July 20?*

Answer - The Zonolite Study refers to a study of former Zonolite workers.

## **Helen Clarke Presentation**

Helen Clarke passed out brochures for the conference "New Directions and Needs in Asbestos Research" which the University of Montana Center for Environmental Health Sciences will convene on July 28-29, 2005. Many of the leading asbestos researches will be participating including Stephen Levin and Harvey Pass, and UM faculty Andrij Holian, Jean Pfau, and Elizabeth Putnam. Libby residents will be able to attend by paying a reduced registration fee of only \$35. Also, on Thursday, July 28 at noon, the public can ask questions of the conference participants without paying a registration fee.

## **Public Comment**

*Audience Member Question - What air concentrations of asbestos resulted from the building demolitions?*

Answer by Peggy Churchill - The first building demolished was in downtown Libby next to the Epperson Mountaineering Building. Water was used to wet down the building before it was demolished, and it was misted during the demolition process. We had three rings of air monitors surrounding the demolition. Asbestos was detected by the monitors but at concentrations low enough that they are below a level of concern. However, our objective is to minimize any possible release of asbestos to the extent practical. We therefore changed the use of water in the demolition of the Loomis home. In this case water was sprayed into the wall cavities for 24 hours prior to the demolition. Air sampling at the second demolition did not detect asbestos during the morning and found only one structure in the afternoon.

*Audience Member Question - The VFW building is across the street from the downtown demolition. That day, a food drive was underway at the VFW. Did asbestos reach the VFW building?*

Answer by Peggy Churchill - We had a monitor next to the VFW building. I do not know the results from that specific monitor, but the results were low enough so that the asbestos concentrations were not a concern.

*Audience Member Question - How many crews are working today on the residential cleanups, and how does the number compare with last year?*

Answer by Peggy Churchill - Two crews are working now. I don't know the exact number of personnel that were working at this time last year, so I can't make a comparison. Implementation of the contract was delayed at this time last year, so I know that the work had not peaked by July during last year's construction season.

*Audience Member Question - ARDNet has been asked if funds are available for carpet removal. Apparently a doctor has advised patients with advanced asbestos disease that are on oxygen to remove their carpets. Is there a source of money for carpet removal? One of the patients lives in a mobile home containing no asbestos.*

Answer - If there is an asbestos issue, the person should contact EPA and ask for air sampling. If the concern is about dust rather than asbestos, I doubt that EPA can do anything.

*Comment by Peggy Churchill - EPA is trying to figure out if carpets are an asbestos sink. In our post-cleanup sampling, we did not detect asbestos, but we need to decide if carpet removal presents a risk.*

*Audience Member Comment - EPA promised to provide HEPA vacuums as part of the residential cleanups. Are they being provided?*

Answer by Peggy Churchill - Yes.

*Audience Member Question - Is it true that EPA does not replace carpets?*

Answer by Peggy Churchill - We are not replacing them now, but they may have been in the early stages of the cleanup. As I said, we are trying to decide what to do about carpets.

*Audience Member Comment - We have been trying to get carpets addressed for four years.*

Response by Peggy Churchill - Carpets are part of the remedial investigation sampling. The proposed plan for the long term cleanup which we hope to issue in December will address carpets.

The public will have an opportunity to comment on this issue and others before the ROD is finalized.

### **Next Meeting**

The next CAG meeting was scheduled for 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 8, 2005 in the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall.

## **Appendix 1**

### **CAG Member & Guest Attendance List July 14, 2005**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Group/Organization Represented</b>
Bill Patten	St. John's Lutheran Hospital
K.W. Maki	Libby Schools
Mike Giesey	CARD
Ken Hays	Senior Citizens
David Latham	<i>The Montanian Newspaper</i>
Peggy Churchill	EPA
Catherine LeCours	DEQ
LeRoy Thom	Former W.R. Grace Employee
Les Skramstad	TAG & Asbestos Victim
Norita Skramstad	Asbestos Victim
Eileen Carney	TAG and ARD Net